

**COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2010**

9:00 A.M. PROMPT

- **DISCUSSION WITH THE IMPACT GROUP – CITY MARKETING PLAN**

10/4/10

Bedford City Council met in a special work session at Bedford City Hall on Monday, September 27, 2010 at 9:00 a.m.

Present: Council Members: Mayor Dan Pocek, Warner Batten, Stan Koci, Paula Mizensak, Marilyn Zolata, Greg Pozar, Don Saunders. Also Present: Clerk of Council Kathleen Lynch. Administration: City Manager Henry Angelo, Finance Director Frank Gambosi and Economic Development Director Mike Mallis. Impact Group: Tom Speaks.

Mayor Pocek said the purpose of the special work session is to discuss the City's potential marketing plan with Impact Group.

Mr. Angelo and Mr. Mallis have been meeting with Mr. Speaks of the Impact Group to discuss marketing and branding the City of Bedford. The City of Bedford worked with Mr. Speaks and was very successful in passing the Safety Force Levy.

Mr. Speaks discussed the proposed marketing plan. It is important to have the tools to attract new business and residents; and to retain current businesses and residents. The City of Bedford has to have an image, perception is key. Mr. Speaks gave a summary of the 1st page of the proposal and the various brands they developed. Examples of the brands are: Bedford – the Center of it All; Bedford – Innovation & Heritage; and the Bedford Advantage- Heritage, Location and Innovation. Mr. Speaks also showed visual variations on these taglines.

Mr. Speaks also said a more internal theme for the City could be "Celebrate Bedford". Councilman Pozar said it is key that the brand be accurate. Mr. Speaks said a brand is a promise.

At this time, Mr. Speaks went through the various proposed phases of the marketing plan. The first thing that needs to be done is a new website. The current website is not user friendly and it lacks continuity. The Fire Department, Police Department and Recreation Department all have their own pages. This would have to change. Mr. Speaks said Impact Group would also train the employees on the content management and uses of the website.

The second part of the plan is to redesign the City newsletter. Mr. Speaks showed a possible template, and said it should be done quarterly and be approximately 8 to 12 pages. Some suggested sections, a citizen spotlight, a financial section. It is important to reinforce being open, honest and responsible.

Mr. Speaks discussed the GANT chart outlining the different phases of implementation. The first and most important being the website. Another great aspect of the new website will be the ability to do email blasts. Mr. Speaks said anyone could sign up for this, not just residents, and it is another method of communication that does not cost postage.

Mr. Angelo said another aspect the website will provide is for employees to access work from their home office. Mr. Speaks said the website has to be functional to be productive.

The third area is the utility bills the City sends out. Mr. Speaks said for a few cents more, the City could send utility bills in an envelope, not a postcard, and include "stuffers" again staying connected to the residents and businesses.

Another area is to have a speaker series. Mr. Speaks said Mr. Gambosi and Mr. Mallis did a great job giving presentation during the levy campaign. He suggested doing a series on the brand, the Bedford Advantage.

Mr. Speak said a simple way to promote the City is to use thank you cards. Taking the time to write a letter goes much farther than people think.

A customer service initiative would be to train the staff, especially the frontline employees. There are basic protocols that have been lost with everyone's hectic schedules. Mr. Speaks said this is another way to promote the brand for Bedford, and Impact Group would do the training. This is something that should be evaluated year after year. With the skepticism of people in local government, it is necessary to make the experience in Bedford a good one.

Mr. Speaks discussed using Facebook. It is a powerful tool, and a very inexpensive way to stay in touch with those interested in the City of Bedford. Mr. Angelo said it was discussed with the two high schools in the City to possibly have as a senior project, their input with the Facebook account.

Mr. Speaks spoke about video creation and its importance in marketing the community. They do not have to be long videos, 1 to 1.5 minutes, and should be from various parts of the community. Pickerington does this now and it has been very helpful to them.

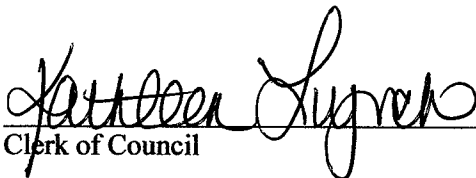
Another area the City needs to focus on is creating a brochure that is different for businesses and residents. It should focus on each of their needs.

Mr. Speaks discussed the importance of media relations and said the newspapers cannot print what they don't have. He explained that 95% of the news is pitched, not sought after by the journalist. Therefore, it is important to continue to give the information to those that can help promote it.

Councilman Koci asked about the cost and if they started today, when could the website be done. Mr. Speaks said a cost sheet will be done, breaking down the various phases of the plan. If Council were to proceed with the website, it should be done by mid-December.

Mayor Pocek asked that discussion of the marketing plan be continued to the work session of Monday, October 4, 2010. All members of Council agreed.

Work Session was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.


Clerk of Council


Mayor – President of Council